

leading for change

what we did

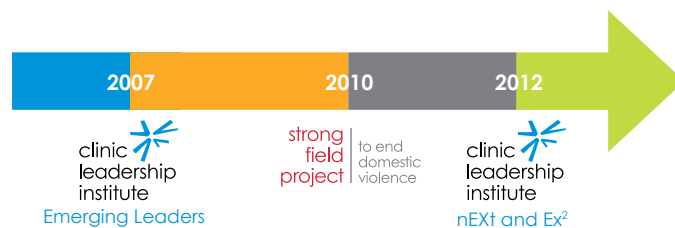
In 2006, as Blue Shield of California Foundation reviewed the impact of its work in the community health center and domestic violence fields, it found that organizations across the board faced a similar challenge: If they were to survive and thrive in a changing environment, they would need to adapt and would need leaders who could guide them through transformation. BSCF realized that this was an opportunity to advance the development of these organizations and create field-level change. By building a critical mass of leaders with solid skills in areas such as operations, data management, policy and change management, BSCF hoped to create the human capital required to innovate and strengthen both fields.

For community health centers, BSCF created the Clinic Leadership Institute, which houses three programs:

- **CLI Emerging Leaders** — for community health center staff who demonstrate executive potential and a long-term commitment to that field.
- **CLI New Executive Transition (nEXt)** — to help new health center CEOs navigate the changes in the health care environment.
- **CLI Executive Excellence (Ex²)** — for five-member executive teams at larger

community health centers to help them lead transformation efforts in their organizations.

For emerging and veteran leaders of domestic violence service organizations, BSCF created the **Strong Field Project Leadership Development Program**.



why it worked

Informed by the Field

BSCF worked closely with advisory groups that included field leaders to understand the history and traditions of each field and create curricula that would hold both resonance and relevance for participants.

The Right Partners

The expertise to design and operate BSCF's program came from partners with much deeper knowledge and experience, and a willingness to collaborate and rethink their current programs to meet the specific needs of the community health center and domestic violence fields.

Defining Success From the Start

BSCF's leadership development investment was guided by a clear picture of what success would look like in terms of the skills and actions of participants, the effect they had on their home organizations, and the broader impact on the field.

Thoughtful Outreach

To ensure that each leadership program cohort has the right balance of participants in terms of geography, experience, ethnicity, and other factors, each of BSCF's partners carefully considered the types of leaders and organizations their programs should reach and conducted broad outreach to encourage applications.

More Than Just Management

Participants learn about leadership styles, how to lead others through change, how to engage in public policy, and how to think creatively about challenges and forge collaborations with other organizations.

The Value of Coaching

For many participants, these programs offer their first exposure to coaching and the support it provides, particularly for developing adaptive leadership capacity.

Building a Network for Change

A cohort strategy was key to helping foster the growth of networks for leaders, and has led to the formation of tight networks that span the state to reduce isolation and increase a sense of collective leadership in each field.

return on investment

Participants have remained in - and are leading - their fields. The majority of rising leaders in BSCF programs report that they feel better prepared to lead. Veteran leaders report that they are aware of an increasing number of respected new leaders and have a greater appreciation for the importance of growing "bench

leadership: one piece of the puzzle

Leadership is just one component of BSCF's comprehensive approach to building capacity throughout the community health center and domestic violence fields. The Foundation's logic model incorporates a wide range of strategies for adaptive leadership, capacity building, innovation and policy.

strength" for their fields. Graduates also are demonstrating their leadership and driving change for the field by creating state or national models of work in their organizations, taking active roles in statewide networks for innovation, and presenting at professional conferences.

what we learned

- A relatively small number of leaders can change the tenor in an organization — and a field.
- Field-specific leadership programs increase relevance for the participants.
- Funders are learning partners and should enter the work respectfully and openly.
- Leadership programs should be tailored to the needs of participants and must adapt continually to meet them.
- Program partners should be willing to tailor their offerings to align with the day-to-day realities of participants.
- Ongoing, longitudinal evaluation based on a clear theory of change is a powerful tool for charting progress and determining overall effects of programs.
- Including organizational support can strengthen a rising leader.
- Field-changing leadership development is expensive and requires a long-term effort.

Download the full [Leading for Change](http://www.blueshieldcafoundation.org) case study at www.blueshieldcafoundation.org.